

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-07 /030 W
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R 301540Z SEP 76
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE TUNIS 6843

ROME FOR DWOR, CASABLANCA FOR WHITMAN

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR TS

SUBJECT: TUNIS AIR: WIDE-BODY AIRCRAFT, TO BUY OR NOT TO BUY

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, SENIOR OFFICIAL TUNIS AIR STATED THAT DEBATE ONGOING WITHIN COMPANY OVER ADVISABILITY OF PRUCHASING WIDE-BODY AIRCARFT BEFORE 1980 AT EARLIEST. ANALYSIS OF ROUTES, CAPACITY, AND LOAD FACTORS HAVE CONVINCED COMMERICAL PEOPLE THAT FLEXIBILITY OFFERED BY LARGER FLEET OF MEDIUM-SIZE AIRCRAFT (727'S, 737'S) IS PREFERABLE TO GREATER CARRYING CAPACITY OF WIDE-BODIES. TECHNICAL PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT WOULD PREFER TO ADD WIDE BODY, PARTIALLY FOR PRESTIGE. EUROPEAN AIRLINES ARE REQUESTING THAT TUNIS AIR USE SMALLER AIRCRAFT ON VARIOUS ROUTES (E.G., TUNIS-ROME), THUS REINFORCING SENTIMENT AGAINST WIDE BODY ACQUISITION. FOR MEOMENT, IT APPEARS AIRLINE HAS COOLED TO PURCHASE OF WIDE-BODY AIRCRAFT.

2. SAME OFFICIAL REPORTED THT, ON COMMERICAL BASIS, EUROPEAN AIRBUS CURRENTLY WOULD BE CLEAR FAVORITE IF WIDE BODY TO BE PRUCHASED.

3. IN SUBSEQUENT DISUCSSION WITH ENGINE COMPANY REP,
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HE CORROBRATED THAT, IN HIS OPINION, AIRLINE NOT

LIKELY TO PURCHASE WIDE-BODY AIRCRAFT SOON UNLESS
GOVERNMENT APPLIES PRESSURE TO OBTAIN "PRESTIGE" AIRPLANE.
HE ALSO INDICATED THAT GOT OFFICIALS NOW BEGINNING TO
REQUEST SAME STUDIED FROM MANUFACTURERS WHICH TUNIS
AIR HAD PREVIOUSLY REQUESTED AND OBTAINED. IN HIS
WORDS, "HERE WE GO AGAIN FROM SQUARE ONE".

4. COMMENT: IF TUNIS AIR DECIDES AGAINST WIDE-BODY
AIRCRAFT, DOUGLAS, LOCKHEED, AND AIRBUS CORP. WILL BE
DISAPPOINTED, TO SAY THE LEAST, BUT INCREMENTAL SALES
OF 727'S AND POSSIBLY 737'S COULD BE AS MUCH
IF NOT MORE IN DOLLAR VALUE. FROM US BALANCE OF TRADE
POINT OF VIEW, DECISION AGAINST WIDE-BODY AIRCRAFT
MAY BE PREFERABLE OUTCOME GIVEN CURRENT LEANING TOWARD
AIRBUS.
MULCAHY

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